

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES 31 JOBS IN BURKE COUNTY *\$24,000 One North Carolina Fund Grant Helps Cherokee Manufacturing Expand*

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today announced that Cherokee Manufacturing, a maker and distributor of landscape and horticulture products, will expand operations in North Carolina for the production of wire baskets and wreath rings, adding 31 new jobs and \$4.1 million in investment over the next three years. The announcement was made possible in part by a \$24,000 One North Carolina Fund grant.

“Cherokee Manufacturing’s decision to expand production in North Carolina is a win for our state’s metal working industry,” Easley said. “I will continue to make the necessary investments in education, workforce development and infrastructure that make our state the right choice for companies to thrive and grow here.”

Founded in 1940 and based in South St. Paul, Minn., Cherokee Manufacturing makes a variety of landscape and horticulture products including wire baskets, wreath rings, planting containers and landscape fabrics. Cherokee Manufacturing’s expansion in North Carolina will focus on production of wreath rings and wire baskets, the latter of which are used by tree growers to secure the integrity of the tree ball during shipping, handling and planting. The expansion will take place at Cherokee Manufacturing’s distribution facility in Morganton. While wages will vary, the expected average weekly wage of the new jobs is \$468, plus benefits. The average weekly wage for Burke County is \$537, not including benefits. The county’s unemployment rate is 6.1 percent, compared to 5.1 percent statewide.

“We selected North Carolina for this expansion because of the business-friendly climate and the state’s attractive incentives program,” said John Gunderman, chairman and chief operating officer of Cherokee Manufacturing. “The enthusiasm for North Carolina demonstrated by all the economic development professionals we worked with was contagious and swayed our decision.”

The One North Carolina Fund assists the state in recruiting and expanding quality jobs by providing financial assistance to businesses or industries deemed by the governor to be vital to a healthy and growing state economy. Through the use of this Fund, more than 17,000 jobs and \$2 billion in investment have been created since 2001.

Other partners who helped make this announcement possible include the N.C. Department of Commerce, AdvantageWest, Burke County and the City of Morganton.

For more information about Cherokee Manufacturing and employment opportunities, please visit www.cherokeemfg.com.

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